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Contact: Christi Lightcap, (303) 239-4190, Christi.Lightcap@state.co.us

Protect Colorado Horses—Three Important Updates

EHV-1, Biosecurity, Brand Inspection

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – This time of year typically kicks off horseback riding, jackpots, horse shows, and a number of other horse events and the Colorado Department of Agriculture reminds horse owners that there are a number of steps to protect their horses this season.

Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1)

On March 26, 2014, the State Veterinarian's Office was notified by the Colorado State University Diagnostic Laboratory that a Larimer County horse tested positive for EHV-1. CDA is investigating the positive case and has placed the facility where the horse is stabled under quarantine. The horse is undergoing treatment and others it may have come into contact with are being monitored but are not showing clinical signs of the disease at this point. At this time the affected horse is the only horse showing any clinical signs of disease and is recovering.

“The most common way for EHV-1 to spread is by direct horse-to-horse contact but it can also spread through the air, contaminated equipment, clothing and hands; this certainly highlights the importance of practicing basic biosecurity practices,” said State Veterinarian, Dr. Keith Roehr. “Equine event organizers should continue to practice routine biosecurity practices that are

effective in prevention of EHV and other horse diseases as well. There was very limited movement from the affected facility so the risk to other horse owners or event organizers is very low, essentially the same as before this index case.”

Symptoms include fever, decreased coordination, nasal discharge, urine dribbling, loss of tail tone, hind limb weakness, leaning against a wall or fence to maintain balance, lethargy, and the inability to rise. While there is no cure, the symptoms of the disease may be treatable. EHV-1 is not transmissible to people; it can be a serious disease of horses that can cause respiratory, neurologic disease and death.

For more information, visit [A Guide To Understanding the Neurologic Form of EHV Infection](#) or visit www.colorado.gov/ag/animals and click on “Animal Health.”

Basic Biosecurity

Basic biosecurity practices can reduce the risk of exposure to diseases. Key points of a biosecurity plan include isolating new animals and those returning to the home premises, supplying clean feed and water, implementing infection-control practices for visitors and personnel and avoiding movement from various locations if possible. Especially important is the isolation of any sick horses. Horse owners are encouraged to contact their veterinarian if sickness appears in their herd.

“Effective biosecurity practices lead to fewer health problems for animals and contribute to a longer and better-quality life for the horse,” said Dr. Roehr. “When you’re traveling with horses, something as simple as a clean water bucket that you don’t share with other people’s horses can greatly affect disease movement.”

For more information on equine biosecurity methods, visit http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/nahms/equine/downloads/equine05/Equine05_is_Biosecurity.pdf.

Brand Inspection

State statutes require a “brand” inspection upon transfer of ownership of horses and may be required when they are transported.

“The Department typically sees an increase in the number of horses bought, sold and transported to various equine events this time of year. It’s important that brand inspections be obtained to protect the equine industry,” said CDA’s Brand Commissioner, Chris Whitney.

The Division of Brand Inspection's primary responsibility is to protect the livestock industry, including horses, from loss by theft or straying; a key component of that responsibility is to inspect horses and verify ownership before sale, transportation beyond 75 miles within Colorado, and transportation out of the state.

Residents get more information about brand inspection requirements and find their brand inspector by visiting www.colorado.gov/ag/brands.

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